

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 CIEP-01 EB-04 TRSE-00 AID-05 EUR-12

NIC-01 DPW-01 /088 W

----- 124797

R 150612Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4501

INFO AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 7505

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: AS, PFOR, VS

SUBJ: LABOR CAUCUS COMMITTEE FORMED TO CAMPIAGN FOR
IMPLEMENTATION OF PARIS AGREEMENTS ON VIET-NAM
AND RECOGNITION OF PRG

REF: CANBERRA A-210, NOV 12

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. SUMMARY: PRESS REPORTS FORMATION NOV 12 OF LABOR
CAUCUS GROUP TO PROMOTE IMPLEMENTATION OF PARIS ACCORDS ON
VIET-NAM AND RECOGNITION OF PRG. DFA HAS CONFIRMED THAT
REPORTS ARE ESSENTIALLY CORRECT. GROUP HAS 39 MEMBERS OF
CAUCUS (NINE SHORT OF A MAJORITY), INCLUDING SEVEN MEMBERS
OF LABOR CABINET (DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER CAIRNS, SENATOR
WHEELDON, TOM UREN, MOSES CASS, DR. EVERINGHAM, SENATOR
CAVANAGH, AND GORDON BRYANT.) AUSTRALIAN POLICY ON PRG
RECOGNITION HAS RECENTLY APPEARED TO CONSOLIDATE ON BASIS
OF CONTINUED OPPOSITION TO SUCH RECOGNITION. WHILE NOT
IMMEDIATE CHANGE EXPECTED, NEW GROUP WILL BE TROUBLESOME
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FOR WHITLAMM. EPISODE UNDERLINES CONTINUING RELATIVE EASE

WITH WHICH LABOR LEFTISTS CAN BRING OTHERS TO SERVE THEIR PURPOSES. PARTICIPATION BY DR. CAIRNS UNDERLINES HIS CONTINUING COMMITMENT TO THE LEFT, PARTICULARLY WHEN VIET-NAM IS INVOLVED. END SUMMARY.

2. AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW REPORTED NOV 15 FORMATION ON NOV 12 OF COMMIBHE OF LABOR PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS WHICH PLEDGED ITSELF TO WORK WITH THE LOCAL PEACE MOVEMENT, TRADE UNIONS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS FOR A "COORDINATED NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARIS PEACE AGREEMENT AND THE RECOGNITION OF THE PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT." COMMITTEE REPORTED TO HAVE 39 MEMBERS (OUT OF 95 MEMBERS OF LABOR PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS).

3. AMONG MEMBERS ARE CONVENOR OF GROUP, SENATOR JAMES KEEFE (QUEENSLAND); SENATOR ARTHUR GIETZELT (NSW, CHAIRMAN OF GROUP); SENATOR JEAN MELTZER (VICTORIA, SECRETAGINOF GROUP); MINISTER FOR URBAN AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THOMAS UREN; MINISTER FOR REPATRIATION, SDATOR JOHN WHEELDON; DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, DR. J.F. CAIRNS (WHO AGREED TO JOIN GROUP BY PHONE FROM NEW YORK); MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, DR. MOSES CASS; ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS, SENATOR JAMES CAVANAGH; AND MINISTER FOR AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY, GORDON BRYANT, FULL LIST OF MEMEBERS NOT YET AVAILABLE.

4. DEVELOPMENT CLEARLY CAUGHT DEPT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS BY SURPRISE, AS EMBASSY INQUIRY TO DFA ON NOV 14 INDICATED FOREIGN AFFAIRS WAS COMPLETELY UNINFORMED ABOUT IT. GVN EMBASSY INQUIRED ABOUT DEVELOPMENT LATER IN DAY AND WAS TOLD BY DFA THAT PRESS STORIES ARE SUBSTANTIALLY CORRECT.

5. COMMENT: GROUP IS EXPECTED TO HAVE NO IMMEDIATE IMPACT ON POLICY OF LABOR GOVERNMENT ON PRG RECOGNITION ISSUE. DFA (PIPER, ASST SECRETARY, UN BRANCH) TOLD GVN EMBASSY IN LATE OCTOBER THAT GOA HAD DECIDED TO MAKE NO RPT NO CHANGE IN ITS POLICY ON NON-RECOGNITION OF PRG AND VOTING AGAINST PRG PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES AND WOULD HOLD THIS POLICY FOR AT LEAST ONE CONFIDENTIAL

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YEAR.

6. OBVIOUSLY, IF GROUP CAN RECRUIT NINE MORE MEMBERS OF LABOR CAUCUS, THERE IS BARE POSSIBILITY OF CAUCUS FORCING CHANGE IN PRESENT AUSTRALIAN POLICY ON PRG RECOGNITION. CAUCUS HAS REPEATEDLY FORCED PRIME MINISTER AND WHITLAM TO CHANGE HIS POLICIES ON ECONOMIC ISSUES, AND AT PRESENT TIME, WHEN WHITLAM LEADERSHIP IS UNDER HEAVY FIRE, ES-

TABLISHMENT OF PRO-PRG GROUP WILL BE FURTHER EMBARRASSMENT.

7. PRESS REPORTS THAT GROUP WAS FORMED FOLLOWING VISIT TO PRG AREA OF SOUTH VIET-NM BY LEFTIST GROUP (REFAIR). PROMINENT LEFTIST FIGURES IN PARLIAMENT THEN JUMPED ON BAND-WAGON. OF CABINET MINISTERS MENTIONED ABOVE, ONLY SUPPRISES ARE SENATOR CAVANAGH, REPUTED AS LONG-TIME LEFTIST BUT ALMOST SILENT ON FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES IN PAST FEW YEARS, AND MR. GORDON BRYANT, WHO SPOKE OUT AGAINST COMMUNIST AGGRESSION IN CAMBONIA FOLLOWING VISIT TO THAT COUNTRY IN LATER 1970. HOWEVER, BRYANT MIGHT BEST BE DESCRIBED AS SOMEWHAT WOOLY SENTIMENTALIST, AND HE MAY VIEW RECOGNITION OF PRG AS QUICKEST WAY TO END FIGHTING, DESTRUCTION, AND DEATH.

8. LEADERS OF CAUCUS GROUP ARE ALL COMMITTED FAR LEFTISTS IN ALP. SENATOR KEEFE WAS PRESIDENT OF ALP IN LATE 1960'S AND CONSISTENTLY SUPPORTED LEFTIST CAUSES. SENATOR GIETZELT, LONG ASSOCIATED WITH COMMUNISTS-CONTROLLED MISCELLANEOUS WORKERS UNION, MAKES NO SECRET OF HIS LEFT SYMPATHIES. SENATOR JEAN MELTZER (ONLY ALP WOMAN SENATOR) IS BRASS-BOUND LEFTIST FANATIC.

9. FORMATION OF GROUP ILLUSTRATES RELATIVE EASE WITH WHICH SMALL NUMBER OF LEFTIST MEMBERS OF LABOR CAUCUS CAN BRING CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF OTHER MEMBERS, NOT USUALLY CNSIDERED OF THE LEFT, TO SERVE LEFTIST PURPOSES. IT IS IRONIC BUT INFORMATIVE TO NOTE THAT DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER CAIRNS, WHILE IN NEW YRK REASSURING AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN AND INVITING FURTHER U.S. INVESTMENT IN AUSTRALIA, FOUND TIME TO REINFORCE HIS LONG-STANDING LEFTIST COMMITTMENT BY JOINING CAUCUS GROUP, PARTICULARLY AS VIET-NAM IS INVOLVED. GREEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGREEMENTS, RECOGNITION, SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS, POLITICAL LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 NOV 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: cunninfx
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974CANBER07505
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740330-0998
From: CANBERRA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741141/aaaabihv.tel
Line Count: 146
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: CANBERRA A-210, NOV 12
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: cunninfx
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 MAY 2002 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <18 MAR 2003 by cunninfx>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LABOR CAUCUS COMMITTEE FORMED TO CAMPIAGN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PARIS AGREEMENTS ON VIET-NAM
TAGS: PFOR, AS, VS, PRG
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005